

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

S P E E C H

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR JOHN FORREST,

P.C., K.C.M.G., LL.D., M.L.A.,

PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER,

RECOMMENDING THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA TO JOIN

THE

AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH.

Delivered at the Town Hall, Perth, Wednesday, the 18th July, 1900.

PERTH:

BY AUTHORITY: RICHARD PETHER, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

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UNION OF THE LAND AND THE SEA, 1900

(E3EW2)

Federation.

*Speech by the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest, P.C.,
K.C.M.G., LL.D., M.L.A., at the Town Hall, Perth,
18th July, 1900.*

SIR JOHN FORREST, who was received with a tumult of cheers, said: I thank you for the kind reception you have given me. First of all, I would like to say to you that I am here to-night at the invitation of the Australian Natives' Association to express the views I hold in regard to the great national movement of Federation. My object in coming here to-night is to assist as far as I can the people of the colony generally, to come to a right decision on the 31st July, when they will be called upon to give their vote as to whether Western Australia shall enter the Federation of Australia or not. On a great question such as this, there is plenty of room for differences of opinion. (Hear, hear.) Therefore I hope that those who agree with what I have to say, and those who do not, will at any rate reserve their applause or otherwise until another occasion. (Hear, hear.) I hope I will say nothing to-night which will give offence to anybody. I will not throughout the whole of what I have to say mention the name of anyone, and I desire that my observations shall be reasonable and moderate to the fullest extent. (Cheers.) It is a matter of great regret to me as a Western Australian, born in the colony, and having so very many friends in it, that the views I hold in regard to this great question of Federation are not shared by many of my oldest and best friends. (Applause.) I do not desire that anything I say this evening, or on any other occasion, should unduly influence anyone. My desire is that everyone should

read, mark, learn and decide for themselves on the 31st July. (Hear, hear.)

Personal Position.

Before I go any further I wish to make a little digression in order to refer to my own personal position in regard to the question. I object to be placed before the people of the colony, whether they are in favour of Federation or not, in any other than the position I have a right to be in. Now, it has been said (especially during the last few weeks), throughout the length and breadth of this colony, that I have changed my opinion in regard to Federation, and, although I may say at once that I am not ashamed of having often changed my opinion—(laughter and applause)—I generally am able to give some good reason for it—(cheers)—but in a very few minutes I will be able to prove to any reasonable, unprejudiced person that, in regard to this question of Federation, I have not to any great extent changed my opinion. (Applause.) I go further, and say that those who say I have changed my opinion materially in regard to this great question go out of their way (unknowingly, I am prepared to admit) to do me an injustice, and to act ungenerously towards me. (Hear, hear.) I will show you that for 12 years—it is a long while—I have not changed my opinion in regard to Australian Federation. (Applause.) I shall be able to prove this to you, not by chance sayings, but from recorded statements, and recorded speeches I have made. On the 27th May, 1898 (two years ago), I addressed a meet-

ing in favour of Federation at St. George's Hall, in Perth; and in my introductory remarks on that occasion I said:

"Now, before I go any further, I should like to inform you and the people of this colony that the idea of Federation which has been and is at the present time so prominent, and which, during the last year, has come into the region of practical politics, is not a new idea with me. The views I express to-night are not just obtained out of the street, or formed during the last few days, because I will read to you from a book, of which I am fortunate to have a copy, my views on this question, expressed at the first meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, held in the city of Sydney on the 30th August, 1888. The views I then expressed—a long time ago, when I did not occupy and perhaps had very little thought of occupying, a prominent public position in this colony under Responsible Government, are almost identical, in fact, I think I may say are identical with the views I hold to-night." The above are the words I said two years ago. I will now tell you what I said 12 years ago in Sydney, and my words are recorded in the Proceedings of the Australian Science Association.

Extract from Address to the Australian Science Association, Sydney, 30th August, 1888.

"The question of Federation must occur to everyone who thinks of the future of Australia, and the problem we have to face is how far we are to regard ourselves as the people of one or of different countries. One of the charms of visiting the United States or Canada is the feeling that you are under one flag and one law, and after visiting those countries, as I have recently, the fact that Australia is divided into five divisions is forcibly brought before me. Our tariffs wage war against one another, and even our laws are dissimilar, and in many respects we are to one another but as the people of foreign nations. No doubt there are great difficulties and great prejudices to be overcome before Federation takes place, for the different colonies and the different Governments will lose their

"prominence, and the Dominion Government will alone be known in the world. This is a very serious obstacle to the ambitions of each colony and will play an important part in preventing the Federation of Australia. For instance, we may all know who are the President and Ministers of the United States, or the Governor-General and Ministers of Canada, but how few of us know anything of the local Governments of the State of California, or of the Province of British Columbia? The States and Provinces are merged in the central Government and Legislature, and it will be difficult to convince the colonies of Australia that it is desirable to sink their individual prominence, and become merely a factor in the central Government. Yet, if we can overcome these selfish or ambitious feelings we will, I think, be convinced that to be federated will be to our material advantage. If Australia could speak with one voice, how much more important would she be. If her tariffs were identical, what a market within herself for free competition would there be. If Australia were federated, how long would the different colonies remain separated for want of railway communication? We should have a railway from west to east, and from south to north; we would be able to enter a railway carriage at Fremantle and in a few days step out of the same carriage at Sydney, in the same way as you may enter a carriage on every Tuesday at Montreal and at midday next Tuesday step out of the same carriage on the shores of the Pacific at Vancouver. But a few years ago it was not considered as practicable that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would be connected by the iron road; but in these few years a number of routes have been opened by which you may cross from New York to San Francisco. Again, the Canadian-Pacific railway, connecting as it does the Eastern and Western provinces of Canada, was for a long time looked upon as impracticable, but it is now completed, and has resulted in the federation of Canada, the Western State of British Columbia only entering into the Dominion on the condition that daily railway communi-

"cation should be established between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In a similar manner Federation in Australia would require, as an indispensable condition, daily communication by railway between the colonies of the continent. To be an Australian will then be a prouder title than to be a New South Welshman, a Queenslander, a Victorian, a South Australian, or a Western Australian—and so much is this even now felt that it is becoming the practice for persons hailing from any of the colonies to call themselves Australians, feeling, no doubt, that the title of continental Australia sinks all other minor divisions. If we are to become a nation, to be the great power in the Southern Hemisphere, it can only be by being federated, to be allied to one another, not only by the ties of nationality and kindred, but also by those material bonds which operated so strongly in our dealing with one another. Our aim should be to make Australia another Britain—another home for the Anglo-Saxon race." I concluded by being very patriotic, as I am proud to say I always am. (Laughter.) I said this: "In our prosperity, however, I trust we will never forget the land of our fathers, the dear old mother country—to which we owe our existence as a people, from which we derive our laws and our liberties, and from which we have a right to a glorious heritage." I am sorry to have had to read so much, but it is necessary in order to show you what I thought 12 years ago. Those were my views in 1888. Reading them to-day—12 years afterwards—they seem to me like an inspiration, as they represent practically the views I hold on this question at the present time. (Applause.)

Action taken at Federal Conventions, etc., etc.

Since 1888 many of you know what has happened. I have attended all the Federal Conventions as a representative of this colony; in 1891 at Sydney; in 1897, one in Adelaide and one in Sydney; and I attended another convention early in 1898 in Melbourne, when the Federal Constitution was completed.

And on May 27, 1898, a month or two after I returned from the Convention, I made the St. George's Hall speech, so often referred to during the last few months with a view of showing that my present action is inconsistent with the speech I then made. That speech was full of good federal sentiments. (Applause.) Having delivered that speech, I went to the Premiers' Conference held in Melbourne in February, 1899, and on my return the Mayor and Corporation of Perth gave me a friendly reception. We are getting nearer home now. Only a little over a year ago, I said to the Mayor and Corporation this amongst other things:—"I do not for a moment tell you that it is all plain sailing before you. The path is beset with difficulties, but on looking at it broadly, I cannot believe, as a patriotic Australian, that it can be to our disadvantage to become part of a great and united nation, and one of far greater importance than we can ever hope to be separately." Again said, continuing: "We will retain possession of our lands, our railways, and our gold mines, and they will be absolutely our own, and under our own control." And again, "Unity is strength, and the more united we are the more able we shall be to fulfil our destiny." That was on February 15, 1899.

The Joint Select Committee.

Parliament met, and on October 5, 1899, after the Joint Select Committee had considered the Federal Bill, and brought up their report, I moved in the Legislative Assembly that the Bill as passed by the Premiers' Conference, and the Bill with the amendments proposed by the Joint Select Committee, should be both referred to the people of the colony, in order that they might judge which of those two Bills best safeguarded the interests of the country. In introducing the matter on October 5, about eight months ago only, I said: "I have spoken on Federation on many occasions outside the colony and in it, and notably, I spoke in St. George's Hall, in Perth, on the 27th of May, 1898. A great deal has been made, or tried to be made, out of what I then said. An attempt has been made to show, with-

"out any real ground, I think, that my views are different from the views I expressed in 1898. I am not at all ashamed of that address for it expresses my general opinions, and I may tell hon. members I am rather proud of that speech—I do not mean to say that with every word of it I am in accord to-day, because I do not suppose it ever happens that if a person reads a speech two years afterwards he will agree with every sentiment expressed at the time, but, generally speaking, that address of the 27th of May, 1898, in St. George's Hall, represents my views in regard to Federation. If I had to make that speech again to-night the only particulars in which I would amend it would be in regard to alterations of a temporary character, which I submit in no way affect the great general question." (Applause.) On documentary evidence the foregoing shows the position I occupied in connection with Federation, and I have referred to it in order to show that I have been a consistent federalist throughout. (Applause.)

Advocacy of better Terms.

Because during last year, during the last sitting of Parliament, I desired to get what I considered very necessary and better terms for this colony, can anyone say for that reason that I am an anti-Federalist? (Cries of "No, no," and applause.) I was only doing my best to protect the interests of the country. (Applause.) I thought we would be safer and better protected if we could get a little alteration in the terms. (Applause.) As you all know, I was not successful in getting what has been called better terms. I tried my best, and there is no one in this room, and very few people in the colony, who know how hard I tried to obtain the alterations desired by the Joint Select Committee, and afterwards the one alteration of five years of full fiscal freedom. After all, most people were willing to take five years' full fiscal freedom about two months ago, and now the full fiscal freedom we are offered by this Bill equals three and a half to four years. The uniform tariff will not come into existence for a year at least, so it is

from three and a half to four years as against six years.

Reasons why better Terms were not obtained.

The reason I was not successful with the other colonies is not hard to seek. The colony was divided about it. If the colony had been united I would have won without any trouble at all. I had no Parliamentary mandate, I had no authority to show for any alteration, except the report of the Joint Select Committee, and when they were led to believe in the other colonies that the people of this colony did not want the alteration, that I and a few others alone wanted it, it was hardly possible to succeed? But I nearly did succeed for all that. I had the support of Queensland and Tasmania, and almost the support of Victoria, and a considerable section of the Press of the Eastern colonies on my side. The principal reason however why we did not succeed was that the cry "The whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," was insisted on by the delegates of the Eastern colonies, in London. With all these forces arrayed against me outside the colony and in it, it is very easy to see the reason why the concession, which ought to have been granted, and which I think would have been accepted by most people in this colony, was not granted. But after all I may tell you the concession would not have been very much good if we had obtained it. (Applause.) I will tell you the reason why. There would have been a large section of the people who would not have accepted it, and would have demanded that the existing customs duties on local produce should be abolished. After all, when we come to carefully examine the question, in the light of existing conditions, what we required was only six years' fiscal freedom instead of the four years' fiscal freedom which we will have under the Bill, by the operation of the sliding scale.

Decision to send the Bill to a Referendum.

Finding no better terms could be obtained I had no hesitation, with the full concurrence of my colleagues, in deciding that no time should be lost in sending the Bill to the people in order that they

might decide the question by their votes. I would like to point out to those who have said that I turned a somersault—(laughter)—a very difficult operation for me to perform—(laughter)—that when I introduced this Referendum Bill into the Assembly two months ago, I told the House plainly that I intended to vote for Federation—(applause)—and I think I can appeal to every one of you in this, that my action in desiring to obtain an amendment of the Bill, in order to further safeguard the interests of this country, was, after all, only the action that an ordinary business man takes almost every day. Having secured an offer, you try to improve the offer, and failing to do so, do you not often say, "Very well, I can't get any better terms than these, and I must have it, I will take it." (Applause.) That was exactly the position I was in. A certain Bill was offered to me. I was favourably inclined to it. I looked into it, and I thought we should get better terms for this colony and I firmly believed we were entitled to better terms. Not being able to get them, I said, Federation is too important and too momentous a question for me to haggle over a small matter; I will advise my fellow colonists to accept the Bill—(applause)—and I will trust to the good sense, the ability, and the patriotism of the people of this colony to work out their own advancement under it. (Applause.)

Changes of Opinion.

There has been a great deal said about my having changed my opinion in regard to Federation, but what about other people changing their opinions? (Laughter.) A very short time ago all the farmers—all my friends, I may tell you—(laughter)—right away from Victoria Plains, up the Avon Valley, through Toodyay, Northam, York, Beverley, and on to Katanning, were seized with panic at the thought of the goldfields separating from the rest of the colony. They were almost frightened out of their lives about it. (Laughter.) I even went as far as Bunbury—(laughter and prolonged cheering)—and the people of Perth and Fremantle got frightened too—(laughter)—for there was a meeting, in

Fremantle, of some of the prominent men, to ascertain what could be done to bring peace to the people of this country and avoid separation. They were all almost frightened out of their lives about the cry for separation on the Eastern goldfields. Now that I have settled this cry for a while, those same people who were so frightened are themselves again, and they are determined to fight Federation at all hazards. At that time all the farmers in the places I have mentioned would have been glad to accept the five years' fiscal freedom that I asked for, but not being able to get that, and their fear of separation having passed away, they appear to be now unwilling to take three or four years' fiscal freedom, under the Bill. But I will tell you this—"We have scotched the snake, not killed it,"—and I know, and those who have any knowledge of the Eastern goldfields know, that the promoters of grievances there will soon revive the cry, either in the same shape as before or in some other shape that will be more acceptable.

Difficulty of Division under Federation.

I think it is well for me to tell you, and the people of the colony through the Press, and it is well for you to remember, that we can resist any demand for separation a great deal better under Federation than outside it. I will tell you why. Under the existing circumstances, we are absolutely in the hands of the Imperial Government. I know the Imperial Government is desirous of doing what is just and right to every portion of Her Majesty's dominions. But it is not always a free agent itself. The Imperial Government has its responsibilities and difficulties, the same as other people, and will be largely influenced—and is bound to be largely influenced in the future—by what Federal Australia thinks in regard to all questions affecting Australasia. I do not think Western Australia will have any assistance except that which is called abstract justice, from the Imperial Government, if we stand out of the Federation, because it will say, "This small number of 180,000 persons refused to federate with nearly four millions in Eastern Australia; they spoiled the scheme of Federation, and with all the

"force of Federated Australia against them, we are not able to assist them in the way we would have otherwise been able to." (Applause.) Now, I would like to tell everyone this: that under Federation this colony cannot be divided unless two things happen: First, that the Parliament of Western Australia approves of it, and second, that the people of this colony, on a referendum, pass a majority vote in favour of the division. There is no greater security that anyone can ask for—that before any part of Western Australia can be divided, if we enter the Federation, the Parliament of Western Australia shall approve of the division, and, more than that, the people of Western Australia, at a referendum, shall approve of it also. There is no such security as that if we remain out of Federation. We are absolutely dependent upon the Imperial Government, which can divide this colony to-morrow by an Act of its own Legislature. If anyone in this room, or any farmer about this place, even away down as far as Bunbury—(laughter)—has any fear of separation in the future—I do not say it is very probable, but it is possible—let him vote for Federation, and then Western Australia can never be separated unless with the voice of the people on a referendum, and with the approval of the Legislature of the colony.

Federation, not Unification.

It is thought by many people that Federation means unification, or that there will be one Government in Australia to do everything, which will have all the power, and that our local government or home rule will be taken away from the colony. That idea is altogether erroneous, as it is not so, except to a limited extent, and as a general rule when it is adopted, it is to the advantage of the colony. It is very injurious that we have so many laws on the same subjects in Australia; and recognising that, it is provided that a certain number of subjects shall be relegated to the Federal Parliament, and that all the rest shall remain to the local Parliament. The subjects that will be handed over to the Federal Parliament are those that the Commonwealth will be in a far better position to deal

with—as the laws of the Commonwealth will have force all over Australia—than the Parliaments of the individual colonies legislating in different ways.

Subjects handed over to Commonwealth.

I will name a few of the subjects to be handed over to the Federal Parliament. It is provided that trade and commerce shall be legislated on by the Federal Parliament, but not exclusively so, because the local Parliament will still be able to legislate, provided, however, that if the laws of the State and of the Commonwealth clash, the laws of the Commonwealth shall prevail. It has been said, that it is not advisable for the State to be able to legislate on a subject on which the Commonwealth can legislate, but in my opinion it is very advisable because it is not possible for the Federal Parliament to legislate on every subject on which it has the power to legislate for many years to come. Therefore, our laws now existing and new ones that may be passed will remain in force until superseded by the Federal Parliament. (Hear, hear.) Then there are naval and military defence, which will be relegated to the Commonwealth. There are also the questions of quarantine, of census and statistics, currency and legal tender, banking, insurance, weights and measures, copyright and inventions, naturalisation, marriage, old age pensions, civil and criminal process, immigration, external affairs, conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes, and many other matters. The Commonwealth Parliament, however, will not have exclusive powers; the colony can also legislate with the proviso that the colony's laws will be superseded in the event of the laws of the Federation clashing with them.

Powers retained.

And I would like to point out to those who say the colony is giving up everything, that it will still have complete control over all its material wealth, over all its lands, and all its gold mines, and all its other mineral resources. And our gold mines have produced no less than 20 millions sterling worth of gold, whilst last year they produced six millions sterling worth, and

during the last eighteen months over nine millions worth. (Applause.) The colony will also have its railways, which produced a revenue of about a million and a quarter, last year subject to the Inter-State Commission, which will have very little effect upon this colony until we are connected by railway with the railway system of Australia. The colony will also have its harbours and rivers, and fisheries and timber, and of the latter the value of the export last year was over half a million sterling. We will also have the control of all our industries and public works, and great public undertakings. (Hear, hear.)

Customs and Excise.

Taxation through the customs and excise will have to be exclusively given up to the Federal Parliament, subject however to the proviso that during the next 10 years, and thereafter till the Federal Parliament otherwise provides, three-fourths of the net revenue derived therefrom shall be returned to the colony. It does not matter what is spent in the colony by the Federal Government upon services or works, even if the Federal Government spent a million in the colony they must return to the colony during the next 10 years three-fourths of the customs and excise revenue collected in the colony. (Applause.)

Non-profitable Services.

Then the Federal Government will take over the Postal and Telegraph Department. Now, the posts and telegraphs last year cost the country £30,000 more than the revenue received from them. (Laughter.) Then as to the defences, the colony has spent £30,000 on them this year, and no revenue is derivable from them. There is also the question of lighthouses, which will probably cost nearly £10,000 a year, and there is no great revenue from them. There is also the question of quarantine, and I do not suppose that anyone will object to that question being handed over to the Federal Parliament. Although there will be a system of book-keeping for the first few years, by which the revenue will be credited and the expenditure debited, still that will not interfere with the three-fourths of the colony's

customs revenue being returned to this colony. These departments being taken over by the Commonwealth probably will not in the end mean a great financial loss, but may even mean a financial gain. (Applause.) And it must not be thought that the one-fourth of the Customs Revenue, which the Federal Government is entitled to retain will be all spent in other parts of Australia and none in this colony.

The Colony's Representation.

This colony will have some representation in the Commonwealth—in fact, it will have equal representation with the other colonies in the Senate, and at the beginning more than its just representation—if judged on the basis of population—in the House of Representatives. (Hear, hear.) And if the colony sends reasonably good men to look after its interests, the Government of the day there, as here, and in all other places, will not be anxious to quarrel with any section of the members of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) As a matter of fact, they will try and do what is right and just, and they will try and assist members of Parliament rather than try and obstruct them.

No Need to fear Injustice.

The Parliament will try and meet our wishes, and there will be no desire that any injustice shall be done to this colony by the people of the other colonies. Such a thing is not likely to occur. Why, it would lead to rebellion if a colony were unjustly treated. No such thing could be possible in a British community as that one colony in the Federation should be wronged and unjustly treated. We may therefore, leave that fear out of our calculations altogether. We must remember that Australia is not the first country that has federated, and that we are federating on much more favourable terms than in other Federations. (Applause.) In the United States, all the customs revenue goes to the central Government. In Canada it is the same, with the exception that certain small allowances are made to the States. The whole customs revenue is there expended by the Federal Parliament for the general welfare. There

are no three-quarters returned to the States there. Yet the people of the United States seem to manage very well. They do not seem to be impoverished or ruined, and in our own country of Canada the progress that it has achieved since it became a federated Dominion is almost marvelous; it is certainly very wonderful. We must also remember this, that the ordinary expenditure will only be charged against the colony. There will be a large permanent expenditure in this colony by the Federal Government on forts and barracks and post offices and telegraphs and such works of a permanent character. Those works will have to be paid for out of the amount charged against the Commonwealth as a whole, and this colony will only be charged in respect to them "per capita." The colony will have to pay for the outside expenditure on a capitation basis, and that under existing conditions will be a very good thing for us.

The Consolidation of the Loans.

Then there is another matter, and that is the consolidation of the Loans of the colony. I do not look forward to any great advantage immediately, because I cannot see how it is going to operate advantageously for some time, as far as Western Australia is concerned, but it is a matter that we may look forward to. As soon as 20 years have elapsed from the time the various loans of the colony have been raised, we have the option of paying them off. When that time arrives, there is no doubt the consolidation of our loans may be made, and if money is then cheaper than when the Loans were raised, we will be able to take advantage of it. I think it was a very wise provision to make in all the loans that have been raised since 1891, that after 20 years they can be repaid at any time, on giving a year's notice to those who have loaned the money, but that the bond holders cannot demand the return of their money for 40 years. That is a one-sided arrangement, which suits the colony very well.

Solvency of States protected.

You are, no doubt, aware that the solvency of the States is protected,

but I do not want to say much about that, because I hope and trust there will never be a necessity to bring this provision into force. Western Australia as far as I can judge is not likely to want help from anyone, but nevertheless the provision should not be despised altogether. If any State does get into financial difficulties, the power of the Commonwealth, under the Bill, will be available in order to sustain the credit of that State.

Defence.

Then there is the provision that the colony shall be defended. Some people may think very little of this provision, but I look upon it as one of the most valuable clauses in the whole Bill. (Applause.) There is no humming and hawing about it. The Bill says, "The Commonwealth shall protect every State against invasion." That means that in times of danger and difficulty from without, every soldier and every man throughout Australia will stand shoulder to shoulder. (Cheers.) Some people think, in times of peace, that war will never come, but when we read of occurrences such as the terrible tragedy that we only heard of yesterday in China, surely it will make everyone think that to sit down in a state of fancied security is not a policy that ought to be adopted in the nineteenth century. That terrible tragedy ought to make us do all we can to place ourselves in the position that, if, unhappily, difficulties should arise, we shall be united throughout Australia, and ready and able to defend our land from invasion. (Applause.)

Transcontinental Railway.

It must be remembered, therefore, that as under Federation there is the obligation upon the whole of Australia to defend Western Australia, this obligation necessitates that there must be a railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta. (Cheers.) All the principal public men in Australia have stated that such a railway is indispensable, and many have pledged themselves to vote for it on the very first possible occasion. (Applause.) I am not prepared to say on what conditions that work is to be carried out, but that is not a matter to be

considered at this moment. But I consider that in the very first session of the Federal Parliament, whoever represents Western Australia in that Parliament, must demand that it shall deal with this important question. (Applause.) When that railway is built as it will be built very shortly, I am certain—(cheers)—what will Fremantle then be? Will it not be known as the Golden Gate of the western side of Australia, just as San Francisco is known as the Golden Gate of the western side of the United States of America? When we think of the great change that is likely soon to occur—with the mail steamers calling at Fremantle, with a railway running through Perth and through the goldfields to all parts of Australia, with thousands annually visiting Fremantle, Perth, and the goldfields who never have the opportunity of seeing us now, what a new vision arises, and what new avenues are seen for trade, for commerce, and for enterprise in the development of the colony? (Applause.)

Federation and the Value of Property.

If this result is to be realised, and I see no reason why it should not be, how can that which many have been speaking so much about come to pass, namely, that property in Perth, Fremantle, and other places is going to be lessened in value? All I can say is that I do not know any country where Federation has injured property. We do not hear of it in the United States, or in Canada. New York, Chicago, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, and other places throughout the United States and Canada have not been injured. Nothing is ever heard of any of those places being ruined, and why should it be so in Western Australia, with its splendid geographical situation, being the nearest to the markets of Europe of any of the colonies? The goldfields of Western Australia are the greatest in the world, and are almost unrivalled, and the colony has magnificent timber, a productive soil, and a good climate. With such immense resources, with free communication to all the markets of the mother land and of Australia for everything we can produce, why should we not hold our own and flourish as well as any of the other colonies?

Not much Risk.

Most of you have, no doubt, travelled throughout Australia as I have. I have travelled from Adelaide to Sydney occasionally, and recently I journeyed by train from Adelaide to Brisbane, and as I travelled along by train the thought often recurred to my mind, from a business point of view, that there was not much risk in joining in partnership with people who lived on those lands and owned that splendid country. (Applause.) It is indeed a glorious prospect to join in Federation for all national purposes. If those who are opposed to Federation, and think that the colony has everything to lose and nothing to gain, would take a trip through Eastern Australia and see those who are inhabiting it, and how they are utilising it, they would come back with different impressions.

Producers and Manufacturers.

I would like to say a word in regard to those who look at Federation solely from a soil producer's and manufacturer's point of view. I would like to ask my friends the farmers and manufacturers, for they are my best friends, a question. Both farmers and manufacturers are producers trying to do the best they can for themselves and for the colony. I wish to ask them as business men whether they think they are likely to get three and a half or four years' protection without Federation? I ask them is not three and a half or four years full fiscal freedom—for that is what it comes to—as a certainty, better than an uncertainty? I think it is. I would ask them to look into that matter very closely and very carefully, because already what do we find? The growers of cereals are willing to sacrifice the pastoralists to start with. Do they think that the pastoralists, who have representatives in the Legislature, are going to support taxes on flour, and everything they want in the pastoral districts? Are they going to tax these things which the farmers grow if the farmers are going to abolish the small duty on the pastoralists' meat? I think myself that the pastoralist will say that if we take away his little protection he is going to have the protection taken off all round. The result will be that the farmers will not get the support of the

pastoralists, in the North-West at any rate, in any scheme by which the duties will be retained. Then there is the dairy producer. I would like to know why the growers of cereals should be protected, and the dairyman (who really wants protecting and stimulating in some way or another) should be deprived of his small protection. I think myself that there would be a good row amongst them all. (Laughter.) That is my idea. If we will not tax one side and tax the other I fear the other fellow will say, "I will take care you don't get a concession if I don't." (Laughter.)

What Guarantee that under Federation Duties will be retained.

But it will be asked pertinently (and this is a very important matter), what guarantee have the farmers and manufacturers—the people who grow from the soil, and those who manufacture—what guarantee have they that, as soon as we enter the Federation, the local Parliament will not remove the duties? They will say that the first Parliament which meets will sweep away the duties. I say, in reply, that there is not the same likelihood of their doing that if we enter the Federation as there would be if we did not enter the Federation—(applause)—because there is an honourable understanding that the retention of these duties was specially placed in the Commonwealth Bill by the whole of Australia, by the statesmen of all Australia, for the very purpose of protecting the financial interests of this colony during the early years of Federation, and also to protect the infant industries of the producers throughout the colony. (Applause.) This is clearly understood by the people, and when it is understood that the duties will gradually come to an end in five years (one-fifth every year), the honourable feelings of the people of the colony will lead them to say, "Let the Bill take its course. We have Federation—that clause was placed there to protect the industries and finances of Western Australia during the early years of Federation—it will disappear gradually in five years and we will keep faith with our fellow colonists who are producers and manu-

"facturers, and will say no more about it." (Applause.) I think that will be the feeling in the minds of the public of the colony. I say to the farmers, producers, and manufacturers, trust the people to do justice to you, and to carry out the compact in that Bill rather than (by throwing away the Bill and not entering the Federation) irritate the people and probably lose the lot. (Hear, hear.) We must not forget this, that during the next six years—I mention six years for this reason, one year before uniform duties come in and five years of what we call the sliding scale; six years altogether before we have absolute free-trade—during those six years we will have the right to send everything we produce into Eastern Australia free of duty, whereas the people in Eastern Australia will have to pay duty on all the productions they send into Western Australia. (Applause.) There is some advantage there. If we have anything to sell, flour, potatoes, timber for instance, we can send it there free of duty, while our neighbours can only send it to us under our tariff subject to the sliding scale in the Bill.

The Timber Trade.

Our timber is a very great product. We sent away over £500,000 worth of timber last year, and there is no reason why that quantity should not be largely increased. It is very much used in the Eastern colonies. During the last 18 months over £60,000 worth of jarrah and some karri have been shipped to the Eastern colonies (mostly Adelaide). I am glad to find that notwithstanding the duties, £60,000 worth of timber found its way to Eastern Australia, and that one-half of it was sent from the well known port of Bunbury. (Laughter.) Whatever disadvantages there may be under Federation to some people (everyone knows where the shoe pinches, and I have no doubt it will pinch somewhere; it will be curious if it does not), for the life of me I cannot find what injury it will do to the timber-cutter having free-trade not only with the mother country but also with all Australia. What harm can Federation do him? The existing customs duties on what he imports will be lost year by year, and he can send his timber to

the Australian markets free instead of having to pay the duty as at present.

Gold Mining.

What harm can Federation do to the gold miner? How can it hurt him? People have said to me, "Will you go to the goldfields and address the people on Federation?" I replied, "I don't see any reason to do so. They will all vote for Federation." (Applause.) My questioners have said, "Why?" I replied, "Because it suits them. It is to their interest. You would never get a people so united as they are on this question if it were not that their interests are identical. They know that they can sell their gold at £3 17s. 10½d. per ounce at the Mint, and they want everything they require to purchase as cheaply as they can get it. That being so, they are all in favour of Federation, as they believe it will be to their material advantage." I do not wish to be understood that I deny to the people on the goldfields the same feeling of patriotism we all have, but there is a feeling as deep if not deeper than the desire for nationhood. There is the desire to do well, and to avoid being impoverished, and that feeling affects us all to some extent—some more than others. (Laughter.)

Further Protection.

The manufacturer is afraid Federation will injure him. I may say that if the manufacturer is of opinion that the voters of the colony are anxious to further protect him, the voters have ample means of doing so. They can protect him for another six years under this Federal Bill. There is nothing whatever to prevent the local Parliament altering the Tariff Act in any way it likes up to the time that uniform duties are established. (Applause.) After uniform duties have been established the local Parliament can for the next five years during the operation of the sliding scale reduce duties, but they cannot raise them to a higher point than they were when uniform duties were established. That is all plain sailing; everyone knows that. Therefore, I say that if we are anxious to protect to a larger extent than 5 per cent. (the present duty) those who make machinery, or those engaged in other mechanical works, the people

of the colony can do so now, and will be able to do so for another year at least. (Applause.) We must remember also that the iron-worker, the man who makes machinery, had no duty at all from 1895 to 1898. Machinery was imported into the colony free of duty from 1895 to 1898. It was only in 1898, about a year ago, that 5 per cent. was placed on machinery. I do not know how the iron-worker got on during those three years, perhaps badly. (Laughter.) If we desire to give him more protection we can give it to him another year, which can last until the five-years sliding scale expires. And the same with clothing. The clothing manufacturer from 1893 to 1898 had no protection whatever. There was 10 per cent. on the raw material, and there was 10 per cent. on apparel and slops (ready-made clothing). I would ask how the manufacturer got on during those five years, but since that time he has had a 5 per cent. margin. It is now 10 per cent. on the raw material, and 15 per cent. on apparel and slops. If we want to pay more for our ready-made clothes, we can do so at any time up to a year hence, when probably uniform duties will apply and the sliding scale will of course come into force.

Coal.

The same remark applies to our coal. If it is in the interest of the colony to protect our local coal, Parliament can protect it. The coal producers possibly want a duty on imported coal, and if it is considered advisable there is no reason why we should not have it. It is a matter which is entirely in our own hands. But we do not like to put duties on imported coal, though we do not mind the Commissioner of Railways making a preferential rate for the local coal. It is the same actually. We may just as well put a duty on as to grant preferential rates. The one causes the loss of revenue, and the other loss of customs. I say to every producer, whether a producer from the soil or a manufacturer, if the people in this colony desire that they shall be better protected than they are for the next six years, the people of this colony, during next year through their Parliament, will have an opportunity of

doing it. (Applause.) I would like to say in that respect, of course, we have a great advantage over the other colonies which have no such power reserved to them in the Commonwealth Bill.

Viticulture.

Then there is the wine-producer, who thinks he is going to be ruined. The wine-producer has had protection for many years. The present duty is at the rate of 6s. 6d. per gallon on wine imported, so that wine that costs 2s. per gallon in South Australia cannot be imported into this colony, without freight, at less than 8s. 6d.

Not Protection for ever.

It cannot be expected that people are going to have protection for ever in regard to the things they require for their daily wants. The only justification for protection on the necessities of life, as far as I can see, is that it will ultimately cheapen the production. That is the only justification I can see for it. I do not think, in regard to those things which they want every day and which everyone must have, that the people are going to pay for ever higher prices than they need. (Applause.) There is another point I would like to mention for the information of the producer and those who wish to have protection—it is this, if we do not join now, but join in a year or two, we must then join on the basis of absolute intercolonial freetrade, for the Federal Parliament has no power whatever to admit any new State except on the basis of intercolonial free-trade, which is the fundamental principle of the Commonwealth Bill. (Applause.) I do not think it is possible to analyse figures and say we are going to lose this or that. The customs tariff was reduced in 1895 and again in 1896, and was amended in 1898 to some extent. I have asked Mr. Owen, the Government Actuary, to give me some figures, as to the operation of the reduction in our tariffs. Notwithstanding those reductions the revenue now is nearly as great as before. If the same trade had been done, the revenue from customs since 1895, on those articles which have been placed on the free list, would have amounted to more than

£500,000, but I do not believe that if those duties had been in force they would have received an additional half-million from customs into the Treasury. I believe the more money people have to spend, the more they enjoy themselves, and the more luxuries they use, and the revenue is stimulated thereby. We all know that New South Wales has only five items on which customs duties are charged, and yet receives one and a half millions out of her customs duties. That shows it does not always follow that by the remission of duties you really lose revenue. Of course, that argument might be carried to an illogical extent. (Laughter.) I should like to say once more to the farmers and manufacturers, if you don't join now, but join at any future time, whether it is one year or more, the terms of joining will be intercolonial free-trade; they can include no protection whatever, it must be on the basis of absolute intercolonial free-trade.

Two Reasons for joining.

There are two reasons, in my opinion, why we ought to join in the Federation. The first reason is because we cannot help joining. ("Yes, we can," and applause.) Everyone is agreed—I have not heard one public man say otherwise—that Federation is our natural destiny, and the only question we hear people talk about is when it shall come about—now, or later on. Some say five years, others ten years; but I have not heard any public man of any standing say it shall not come at all. For my own part, I say at once to all of you, that if Federation could have been deferred over the whole of Australia for a time, I should not have objected. (Hear, hear.) I think we could have gone on very well as we are, developing our industries. I think it would have been better if it could have been delayed till we were more equal. But we have no choice in the matter. Federation has come about, and we have to decide once and for all whether we shall join Federation or not. One reason why we cannot help joining is that three-fifths of our population come from the Eastern colonies. (Applause.) They have their homes and friends there, and have their sympathies with the

friends they have left behind them. (Applause.) There is another reason, too. The population of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie will be doubled when we get the great water scheme up there—(applause)—and I would like to know then, whether they would be content to remain out of the Federation of this continent. ("No," and applause.) Besides the public opinion throughout Australia and the Empire will exercise an influence upon us, and in my opinion we cannot help joining soon, if we do not join at the present moment. (Applause.) I am quite positive of this—that the new population that has come to the colony, especially those on the Eastern goldfields, will never be content to remain out of the Federal Union. The second reason is that it will be to our advantage to join now rather than in a few years. In our own interests, in the interests of this colony, we cannot afford to stand aloof. Our interests demand our presence in the Federal Parliament. I should like to know the position we should be in if we were out of Federation when some great question affecting us was being discussed in the Federal Parliament. Our interests would have no one to look after them; we should be absolutely sacrificed. Supposing it were proposed in the Federal Parliament that Port Darwin should be made the "gate of Australia," and that the railway should be extended from South Australia northward, and from Queensland across by the Gulf of Carpentaria into Port Darwin. We should be left out. Fremantle would no longer be the "gate of Australia." If that proposal were made—I do not say it would—who would be there to fight our battle? We would be absolutely powerless to influence any great question connected with the national life or interests of Australia. What influence would we have in Australia? We would have none, and none beyond. Even if our population should increase to a quarter of a million or more, what influence would we have in the counsels of the Empire? I would like everyone in the colony to look these facts straight in the face and then say which is best: Federation, with three and a half or four years' full protection for our farmers and manufacturers, equal representation in the Senate for all time,

and more than our share of representation in the Lower House at the start; or to remain out of Federation and take the risk of joining in a year or two, with no assured representation in the Senate, with no protection for our industries, and, what is worse than all, internal dissensions and discord rampant meanwhile throughout the colony.

Difficulties of Situation.

Can we afford to remain out in these circumstances, and have no voice in moulding and fashioning, in its early days, the foundations on which the Federal structure is for all time to rest? My opinion is that we are too mixed up with the future of the people of Australia to take such a course. (Applause.) "Our fate with theirs, for good or ill, are woven threads." (Applause.) I should like to say to you, to-night, that all through these years, since the matter came into the region of practical politics, I have had my periods of doubts, and anxieties, and fears on this question, and I would be wrong if I were to say that I have none left still. There are, no doubt, great difficulties ahead for us and probably for all the other colonies of Australia. Whether we are in Federation or not, we shall have plenty of difficulties to confront. In reading the controversies that are taking place in the Press and on the platform over this question, one is almost inclined to think that it is a discussion on the great principles of freetrade and protection over again. Notwithstanding all my anxieties, I think we shall be doing right to take the risk. (Applause.) I think, too, that it is wiser and better for us to associate ourselves with the higher, broader, and nobler ideas of greatness and Empire rather than with those of parochialism and isolation. (Applause.) I have no fault whatever to find with anyone who thinks otherwise in this matter. I hope everyone in the colony will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, and judge for themselves, and whichever way they may cast their votes—should they be my closest and most intimate friends—I would never think the worse of them for holding a different opinion to that held by me on this important question. (Applause.)

Chief Aims and Objects.

We ought to try as far as we can to deal with this matter on practical lines. I am not going to discard sentiment. I am very sentimental myself sometimes. (Laughter.) We all, however, ought to keep before us the aims and objects we have in view. What are those aims and objects? As far as I can judge, they are, first, to assist in consolidating the Empire, and to strengthen the colony's position for defensive purposes. (Applause.) It is surely our first duty to assist in consolidating the Empire. (Hear, hear.) It should also surely be our aim and object to build up on this great continent under the Southern Cross another home for our countrymen, "compassed by the inviolate sea." The colony has also another duty, and that is to take its share of the cares of nationhood on its shoulders, and to do its best to be self-reliant. But while we are anxious and willing to take our share of the cares of nationhood on our shoulders, and to be more self-reliant, I hope and pray that we shall always remain faithful and loyal to the mother country. (Applause.) These are the aims and objects that we ought to keep before us, and I believe that if we keep these aims and objects before us, we may fairly sink all other minor considerations.

Letting well alone.

There is one argument that has been used by many people, and that is the argument or the policy of "letting well alone." Many people say, "You have done well here during the last 10 years, during which time you have had self-government. Why, then, are you not content, and why not let well alone?" It is true that we have done well under responsible Government. We have made magnificent progress. From a population of 50,000 we have grown to a population of 180,000. Our revenue has increased from half a million to nearly three millions sterling per annum, and our gold production from very small figures to the enormous total of 20 millions sterling, nine millions of which have been produced during the last 18 months. Since we obtained responsible Govern-

ment the imports and exports have increased from one and a half millions to eleven and a half millions sterling per annum. A great record surely; there are very few records like it in the world. It shows that the "let well alone" argument is a good one, and that it should receive careful consideration from everyone. Notwithstanding that, however, I would say again, can we remain outside this great Federal movement? Can we see a nation arising and take no part in shaping its destiny? Are we to wait and judge, taking no responsibility, giving no help, doing nothing at all for our nation or for our race in this great work of laying the foundation of the future Australian nation? I feel that most of us here who are the architects of our own fortunes, have a feeling that we should share with our countrymen all over Australia the task of building up a great country on this Continent, and that we should stand shoulder to shoulder with them. (Applause.) That, however, is a question that will have to be determined by the people of this Colony on the 31st of July.

The Wages Bogy.

There is another question that has been brought forward recently. I might call it the wages bogy. (Hear, hear.) The wages bogy has been set going, and the curious thing is that it has been set going, not by those who are receiving the present wages, but by those who are paying them. (Laughter.) I have no doubt that the wages question has been raised with the object of frightening the people who are called the labouring classes. In my opinion the wages for labour under Federation will be influenced by the same causes as now, neither more nor less, and that is all I intend to say on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

Broad National Lines.

I think we had better try and decide this question on broad national lines, and I wish everyone to do so on polling day. I would like you to remember one thing, and that is the influence of the goldfields on the present position and prosperity of the colony. I have had very many hard things said

of me sometimes by the Press on the Eastern goldfields, and being a Scotchman, I generally hit back. The motto of the Order of the Thistle might well be mine, *Nemo me impune lacessit* ("No one provokes me with impunity"). (Hear, hear.) But that does not prevent me from doing justice to the goldfields. The position of the colony to-day is mainly due to the production of twenty millions of gold, nine millions of which have been produced during the last eighteen months. The figures almost stagger us when we think of them. The first thought which probably occurs to most of us when we think about the subject is a feeling of some disappointment that so much gold should have been obtained, and that we should have secured so little of it. (Laughter.)

A larger Population required.

We can never be a great country, we can never occupy any very important place in the world's affairs, unless we have a larger population, and we must do all we can, if we want to see this country flourish and be a great country, to encourage population to come here. I read some years ago a most interesting book, a work by the late Sir Henry Parkes—(applause)—an autobiography of fifty years of his life in Australia. Amongst other wise things, Sir Henry Parkes said was this: "The more men of the right class you have in a land where life has ample room, the better it must be for every man of every class; that where all is a wilderness before us, nothing is so valuable as human labour." (Applause.) Those words are applicable to this country. We have plenty of room here, with unrivalled gold mines, which should attract and encourage people to come and throw in their lot with the people of this colony, and thereby add to the population, and make this a great country. As I have already said, Federation, when it comes upon us, as I hope and believe will be the case, will no doubt bring with it plenty of drawbacks, disappointments, and difficulties. Even now we have some of them to confront, and it is a very good thing, because the world would be very uninteresting if we had no difficulties to surmount. The difficulties under Federation may

be even greater than at present, yet I think we should be in no way dismayed. I hope and believe that Federation will do many good things for us. I believe that it will elevate and dignify our public life, and everyone throughout Australia desires that. I might, perhaps, say that there is plenty of room for it. With a wider area for electorates and more people as electors I hope and believe there will be greater care taken in the selection of the members of the Federal Parliament, and consequently that public life will be elevated and dignified thereby. In Western Australia we live too much by ourselves, around the corner out of sight, as I have often said, no one coming to see us unless for some set particular purpose. That disability will be removed when the mail steamers call at Fremantle, as I hope they will shortly. I believe also that Federation will moderate our politics, place the Parliamentary system on a broader and surer foundation, and above all will "make the bounds of freedom wider yet."

The Object in view.

What, after all, is the object we have in view? Surely it is not to help the few at the expense of the many, or to enable a few to flourish and grow rich? The great object we all have in view, especially those who are entrusted with great responsibilities as leaders of public opinion, is to uplift and exalt the masses of the people—(cheers)—and to build up a nation of healthy, intelligent, happy, and high-minded people. That is the great work that we have before us, and I believe that under Federation that great work will be better done.

Conclusion.

I thank you for the way you have listened to me, and I will conclude by quoting the last words of Sir Henry Parkes in his autobiography. Writing on the prospects of Australian Federation, he said: "A new generation is close upon us; the many will know no other land than Fair Australia. They will bring, let us hope, with the tie of nativity, more ample stores of knowledge, nobler capacities for patriotic service, and an imperishable love of freedom and jus-

"tice. Standing before the uplifted
"veil, let the meanest of us breathe a
"fervent prayer that the Almighty may
"guide the young Commonwealth on
"the high road of her starry future;

"that her people may be abundantly
"blessed within these encompassing seas
"of peace, and that their influence
"beyond may be a blessing to all man-
"kind." (Prolonged cheering.)

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A former population reviewer.
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